

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE A-15NEW YORK TIMES
21 JUNE 1979

CIA. 8 SSC

~~ORIG. SALT~~

Secret Senate Hearings on Arms Treaty Called Crucial

By CHARLES MOHR

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, June 20 — Prolonged and exhaustive public hearings will be conducted this summer by two Senate committees on the proposed arms-limitation treaty. But the shorter, secret hearings by the Select Committee on Intelligence may do considerably more to influence key votes when the treaty comes up for approval on the Senate floor.

Senator Birch Bayh, Democrat of Indiana, the Intelligence Committee

chairman, said the hearings of his committee "may be one of the most important ingredients in the debate" on the strategic arms treaty with the Soviet Union.

Although few Senators are willing to concede that they would consider delegating responsibility for deciding whether to approve or reject the arms accord, it is thought likely that many will be influenced by the Intelligence Committee's findings on whether the United States can adequately verify Soviet compliance with the treaty terms.

The rules of the Senate provide that the Foreign Relations Committee has jurisdiction over treaties even if the subject of the treaty falls under the jurisdiction of another committee.

Hearings Begin in July

The Foreign Relations Committee therefore is the only committee with authority to consider amendments to the treaty and to vote on whether it should be reported favorably to the full Senate. There appears to be a narrow majority in favor of the treaty on that committee, which hopes to begin public hearings the second week of July and finish by the end of the month.

A majority of the Armed Services Committee is explicitly or tacitly hostile to the treaty or to some of its provisions. Although it cannot pass formally on the document, it is expected to hold even longer hearings of its own to "make a record" and to "educate" the public.

In contrast to these long-running public dramas, Senator Bayh said in an interview, he hopes to be able to complete Intelligence Committee hearings in 11 days or less.

Those hearings, and certainly the most important testimony from intelligence officials, will be conducted in secret. The committee report will also be a confidential Senate document not available to the

public, Mr. Bayh said.

However, he said, it would be desirable to make public a shorter, sanitized version of the committee report giving the panel's conclusions on the verification problems posed by the treaty.

Senator Frank Church, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, said this week that Senator Bayh and Senator Barry Goldwater of Arizona, the ranking Republican member of the Intelligence Committee, would be invited to testify before the Foreign Relations Committee in secret, then in public session.

"The committee's judgment should be as objective, technical and nonpartisan as possible," Mr. Bayh said. "It's not our job to pass on its political merits, although we will do that as individual Senators."

Senator Bayh said he was hoping for unanimity or near-unanimity in the committee. Because some strong opponents of the treaty are also members of the Intelligence Committee, for example, Senators Henry M. Jackson, Democrat of Washington and Jake Garn, Republican of Utah, this may be hard to obtain.

Some conservatives say privately that they do not regard verification as the major issue because they find so much else to object to, but they do see it as a useful debating point.